



1/8/79  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

ASØ38

S.S.

January 8, 1979

UNCLASSIFIED

TO: D - Mr. Christopher

FROM: HA - Patricia M. Derian

Argentine Political Prisoners in the U.S. Hemispheric  
Parole Program

We initialed the Latin American Hemispheric Parole in June 1978 authorizing admission into the United States for 500 refugees/detainees and their families. Up to now few of the 2,900 Argentine political prisoners have benefited from the program. The major obstacle has been the refusal of the Argentine authorities to allow U.S. Consular Officers to interview the detainees or grant the right of option to detainees. On November 15, 1978 the GOA finally granted permission for 81 prisoners held under the National Executive Power (PEN) to be interviewed at the same time they denied our request to interview 166 others.

Of the 81 detainees authorized to be interviewed, 42 have been interviewed by our consular officer and the remaining 39 are expected to be interviewed by February 28, 1979, according to the Embassy. Of the 42 detainees already interviewed, 16 have been issued certificates of conditional acceptance; 24 require further processing; and 2 have been found ineligible for parole by the consular officer. This month the Embassy plans to submit to the GOA a request to interview an additional 200 political prisoners who have expressed an interest in our program.

Based on past experience, between four and six months elapse from the time a detainee is interviewed until arrival in the United States (providing that release is approved by the GOA). This time lag is due to protracted Argentine right of option procedures. For example, the Board which considers applications for the right of option normally takes 90 to 120 days to render a decision. There

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

UNCLASSIFIED

620105

17405

UNCLASSIFIED

-2-

are no indications at present that the Argentine plan to expedite this process.

The Embassy reports that a reasonable projection would be for no more than 100 detainees to be paroled into the United States before June 1979, with a possibility that approximately 200 might enter during the last half of 1979. HA notes even this level assumes a change from the past pattern of the GOA conduct on this matter. It is possible that the visit of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights scheduled for May will stimulate further release of detainees.

Our Embassy has repeatedly sought to expedite this program, with only the slim results described above thus far. INS is prepared to send an Immigration Officer to Buenos Aires to speed the application process as soon as additional candidates are available for interview--expected to be before the end of January. The Embassy has requested additional consular staff to speed the interviewing process. Expediting our procedures is needed to avoid the public and Congressional criticism which followed the slow start of the previous Chilean Parole Program, and which is beginning within the NGO community on the current Hemispheric Parole.

Drafted: HA:JChavchavadze:mm  
x28771:1/8/79

Concurrences: HA: FASieverts  
HA: MSchneider  
ARA: RGuzman

UNCLASSIFIED